

Holiday markets around Germany

Christmas markets range from the small, intimate village square variety to the massive, sprawling markets to be found in cities such as Nürnberg and Frankfurt. Many feature live music — brass and vocal choirs — and other forms of entertainment.

Visiting the larger markets during off-peak times (not on weekends) and using public transportation is recommended to avoid traffic problems. If you are planning on sampling any of the holiday beverages — hot, spiced apple wine or Glühwein — be sure to take along a designated driver or use public transportation.

Check with your local USO or Outdoor Recreation office to find out when they are offering trips to Christmas markets near and far.

Following are the times and dates of some of Germany’s most well-known markets:

Aachen — through Dec. 20, 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. daily

Ansbach — Nov. 26 to Dec. 24, Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Aschaffenburg — Nov. 25 to Dec. 22, Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Augsburg — Nov. 25 to Dec. 24, Monday to Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Bad Kreuznach — Nov. 25 to Dec. 5, Monday to Friday 3-9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays noon to 9 p.m.

Bonn — through Dec. 23, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

Cologne — through Dec. 23, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

Darmstadt — through Dec. 23, Monday to Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Dinkelsbühl — Nov. 25 to Dec. 21, Monday to Friday 2-8 p.m., Saturday and

Sunday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Dortmund — through Dec. 23, Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday noon to 9 p.m.

Dresden — Nov. 25 to Dec. 24, Sunday to Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Dec. 24 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Düsseldorf — through Dec. 23, 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily

Frankfurt — Nov. 24 to Dec. 22, Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Freiburg — through Dec. 23, Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Sunday 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Fulda — Nov. 28 to Dec. 20, Monday to Saturday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sunday 12:30-7 p.m.

Giessen — Nov. 29 to Dec. 20, Monday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sunday 2-7 p.m.

Hamburg — through Dec. 23, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

Hanau — Nov. 26 to Dec. 22, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily

Heidelberg — Nov. 24 to Dec. 22, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

Kaiserslautern — Nov. 26 to Dec. 22, Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday 1-9 p.m.

Koblenz — through Dec. 22, Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Mainz — Nov. 25 to Dec. 23, Monday to Friday 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Michelstadt — Nov. 26 to Dec. 19, Wednesday to Friday 2-8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Munich — Nov. 26 to Dec. 24, Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Nürnberg — Nov. 26 to Dec. 24, Monday to Wednesday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday to Saturday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sunday 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Rothenburg — Nov. 26 to Dec. 22, Monday to Friday 12:30-7 p.m., Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Sunday 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Rüdesheim — Nov. 24 to Dec. 19, Wednesday to Thursday 2-8 p.m., Friday 2-9 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Stuttgart — Nov. 26 to Dec. 23, Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Trier — through Dec. 22, Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Wiesbaden — Nov. 23 to Dec. 23, Monday to Thursday 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday noon to 9 p.m.



Photo courtesy of the Nürnberg Tourist Office
Children go for a train ride at the Nürnberg Christmas Market.

Catching the holiday spirit Explore a German Christmas market for sights, scents and sugary treats

By LeAnne MacAllister
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There’s something especially charming about Europe during the Christmas season.

Sipping on Glühwein, nibbling on Lebkuchen and gazing over church squares with bell towers and steeples covered in a blanket of snow makes one almost feel like breaking into song. But before giving into the urge to sing a verse from the “The Sound of Music,” save your energy to explore a German Christmas market.

Whether you go for the food, wine, handicrafts or the picture-perfect setting, Christmas markets offer a festival for the senses. The scent of freshly baked gingerbread fills the air as hot cocoa warms the body and eyes feast upon the unique treasures that only appear at this time of year. Holiday music sets the scene, along with the ring of cash registers.

The tradition of hosting a winter market or St. Nicholas market dates back to the 1400s in Dresden and even earlier in other places. Christmas markets were just one of the many different seasonal markets featured in towns and villages year after year.

The break in the routine was a welcome change in the days before shopping malls and antique stores. Despite the various competing forces in modern times, the concept of Christmas markets continues to flourish across Germany today.

As they did in earlier times, vendors still set up their temporary shops by the town’s

main church to attract the pious during the holiday season. Yet the concept of hosting the market for a few days so the vendors could move on to the next town’s market has evolved over the years. While maintaining their success, Christmas markets and marketers have multiplied, increasing the number of shopping days and selections year after year.

Originally Christmas markets were arranged to allow townspeople an opportunity to buy holiday celebration necessities such as moulds and cutters for baking, candles, decorations, desserts and toys. Today many markets have developed their own unique specialties for sale as well as distinct features and attractions.

Aachen’s market is known for its gingerbread. Nürnberg also specializes in gingerbread, along with gold foil angels and prune men. Dresden makes a delicious Stollen German pastry. Many markets in eastern Germany are famous for their wooden crafts.

Schlitz, just east of Giessen, is known for the world’s biggest candle. Dortmund claims to display the world’s biggest Christmas tree, and if music boxes stir your fancy check out Osnabrück.

It’s hard to find a city or town that doesn’t have its own market and specialties these days. Be it for four days or four weeks, you won’t have to travel far to find a Christmas market during the Advent season.

The city of Cologne hosts a total of seven different Christmas markets, includ-



Photo courtesy of Heidelberg Tourist Office
Heidelberg’s Christmas Market flows from the Marktplatz by the Heiliggeistkirche into the pedestrian zone in the downtown area.



Photo courtesy of the Heidelberg Tourist Office
St. Nikolaus makes an appearance at many of the local Christmas markets. Traditional concerts performed by brass bands and choirs are also a major part of festivities.

ing a medieval market outside of the chocolate factory. The city offers various tours in conjunction with the markets. Guests can take the “Krippenweg,” a tour through the cathedral’s nativity cribs, churches and shops. If you’ve already seen the churches by land, boat rides along the Rhein River are offered on weekends during Advent.

Frankfurt’s long Christmas market tradition attracts three million visitors annually. Known as one of the most lavishly decorated markets

in Germany, it used to be the exclusive place for Frankfurters to buy Christmas gifts for children. The news of this famous market has spread, and today cities in the United Kingdom take turns hosting an imported version of the Frankfurt Christmas market.

You won’t have to travel far to find a Christmas market, no matter where you live in Germany. Grab the family and brave the cold—the Glühwein and gingerbread alone make it worth the trip.



Photo by Karl Weisel
The Gelnhausen Untermarkt features a traditional Christmas market Dec. 3-5.

Check out these websites for more information on markets and other German Christmas traditions: www.deutscher-weihnachtszauber.com, www.serve.com/shear/germusa/advmarkt.htm and www.german-way.com/german/christmas.html.

Around Baumholder

★ Medieval Christmas market at Thalichtenburg Castle, Nov. 27 and 28 featuring arts and crafts, clowns, jugglers, fire-

eaters and a knight camp with crossbow firing.

★ Baumholder Christmas market, starts Dec. 3 at 5 p.m. with a musical ceremony at the marketplace Christmas tree. Santa stops by Dec. 4. Shops and trailers will sell food items and gifts along Kennedyallee and Poststrasse from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Check out the nativity scene with live animals in the backyard of Gisas’ flower shop.

★ Santa Claus Ball at the Brühlhalle, Dec. 4 at 8 p.m., sponsored by TM Burgfried.